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The New Style the True Style :

OR,

T H E R E A S O N S

FOR

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ALTERING the STYLE

Laid down in a plain and easy Manner ;

AND

T H E O B J E C T I O N S

T O

The New Style answered,

So far as Religion is concerned.

A

S E R M O N.

By P. LLOYD, A. M. Curate of *Roxwell*,
in *Essex*.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. BATHURST, at the *Cross-Keys*,
over-against St. *Dunstan's Church, Fleetstreet.*

M.DCC.LIII.

The New Style the True Style :

OR

THE REASONS

FOR

ALTERING the STYLE

laid down in a plain and easy Manner ;

AND

THE OBJECTIONS

TO

The New Style answered,

So far as Religion is concerned.

A

S E R M O N .

By P. LLOYD, A. M. Curate of Rye.

1754.

L O N D O N .

Printed for C. BARNARD, at the Grob Shop,
over against St. Dunstons Church, Fleet-Street.

MILCOCH

T O T H E
R E A D E R.

A Few Days before Christmas last, bearing that some of my Parishioners, and other Neighbours, expressed so great a Dislike to the Act for regulating the Calendar, because it changed the Time for observing the Festivals, that they talked of omitting their Duty on the Feast of the Nativity on that Account, I thought it a Matter of too much Consequence to Religion not to take Notice of it from the Pulpit: Some of my Audience, whose Judgment and Integrity I had ever found deserving of the greatest Regard, approved my Endeavours to put a Stop betimes to so dangerous a Mistake. Finding afterwards, that the same Prejudices prevailed in other Parts of the Kingdom, and not presuming to offer any Thing to the Public, especially of such a Nature, upon the Strength of my own Judgment, I ventured to shew this Discourse to some Persons well known and greatly respected by the learned World: They encouraged me to print it. If it contributes to remove the Prejudices of People against the New Style, my Design will be fully answered.

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GEN. i. 14.

And God said, Let there be Lights in the Firmament of the Heaven, to divide the Day from the Night: And let them be for Signs, and for Seasons, and for Days, and Years.

IT is scarce possible to survey the Works of God, the Frame of the World, the Nature and Disposition of the several Parts, together with the Relation they bear to each other, without observing the wise Design and Contrivance of the Author, and the Fitness of them to answer the Ends he had in framing them. This is so obvious, I say, in many Instances, that it is scarce possible to consider them with Attention, and not see it: But here the sacred Historian, at the same Time that he speaks of God's framing the Lights in the Firmament of the Heaven, tells us for what Purposes they were designed, what Uses they were to serve, saying, *Let them be to divide the Day from the Night: Let them be for Seasons, for Days, and for Years.*

We cannot doubt, but that the Stars are included under the general Name of *Lights* in this Verse; these appearing to us in the Absence of the Sun from our Hemisphere, and, by affording then some Portion of Light, distinguish the Day from the Night: But since, by the unconnected Manner of expressing the several Particulars, and the Use of the Word *Signs*, in the *English* Translation (by which is usually meant the Constellations, through which the Sun and Moon seem to move in their Orbits) some may be led to think, that these Constellations are the Signs here intended; it is necessary to observe farther, that, though the Stars are

not excluded, yet the two great Lights, or Sun and Moon, are particularly meant; for the Historian adds, *God made two great Lights, the greater Light to rule the Day, the lesser Light to rule the Night.* That the Uses of these are especially signified appears from another Translation out of the *Hebrew*, which keeps clear of the Ambiguity before noted, and may be thus expressed: * *Let there be Lights in the Expanse of Heaven, that they may be for Signs, or Tokens, both to distinguish the Seasons, and to distinguish Days and Years.* The Words imply not only that they *may*, but *ought* to be applied to this Purpose; the Manner of Expression denoting some Degree of Obligation, by saying, *Let them be for Signs*; let Man employ his Skill to adapt them to these Uses, for the better Regulation of civil Life.

As I shall endeavour to speak intelligibly to the Unlearned (for whom this is chiefly intended) I will designedly avoid taking Notice, whether it is owing to the Sun's or the Earth's Motion, that the several Appearances arise, which I shall have Occasion to mention: For those, who may reasonably be supposed capable of observing this Defect in the Discourse, do not want to be informed in that Particular; and those, who are not, will be better pleased that I should enter as little as may be into Disquisitions of Philosophy, when they expect to be instructed so far only as Religion is concerned in the present Subject.

The Changes of the Weather, and Temperature of the Air, depend on a Multitude of Causes; many of which are inscrutable to us: Notwithstanding which it may be truly said, that the Sun, by its various Positions with Respect to the Earth, is the

* *Sunto Luminaria in expanso Coeli,—ut sint in Signa, cum Tempestatibus, tum Diebus et Annis. Jun. & Trem.*

immediate, uniform, general Cause of the Seasons of the Year; since, if other Causes did not interfere with the Operation of this, we should feel a gradual Increase of Heat from the Middle of Winter to the Midst of Summer, in the same Manner that we expect it from the Rising of the Sun till it arrives to its greatest Height at Noon: From that Time its Heat would decrease by the same slow Degrees. The Sun acts uniformly, according to its Position, and * not its Distance, with Respect to us; Its Position is gradually † changing from one End of the Year to the other, the Sun rises from its lowest State of Depressi^{on} in Winter, to its highest Elevation in Summer, by very slow Degrees; and then descending to the same Position again, the Seasons changing by the same Gradation.

* It is well known, to the Learned in Astronomy, that the Sun is nearer to the Earth in Winter than in Summer.

† The Alteration of the Sun's Height, with Respect to us, may be known by the Lengths of Shadows, which, at the Rising and Setting of the Sun, are of considerable Length. To observe the different Heights of the Sun on the opposite Seasons of Summer and Winter, the Lengths of Shadows must be observed on the same Hour of the Day, on the two Solstices.

When the Sun is low, its Rays, moving in straight Lines as from a Center, fall on us more obliquely; consequently, fewer in Number fall within the same Space, as may be proved from the Length of Shadows. As the Sun rises towards its greatest Height at Noon, the Shadows shorten, and become more distinct by the greater Number of Rays, that fall on and around the Bodies that cast them.

That the greater Heat of the Sun is caused by the greater Number of Rays that fall within the same Space, may be proved from the common Experiment of a Burning-Glass; which, by its Shape (being thick in the Middle and thinner towards the Sides) collects all the Rays that fall on its Surface to a Point, at a small Distance from it, called its Focus: If, therefore, all the Rays that fall on its Surface, collected into a Point, set Fire to Combustibles, the same Rays, spreading over a Plane half as big as the Glass, would warm with double the Force that they would on a Plane equal to the whole Surface, and so on.

Besides this annual Change in the Sun's Position (from whence arises the Distinction of the Seasons) there is a daily Motion, which produces the Changes of Day and Night, performed in the Space of twenty-four Hours. This is the most common and natural Measure of Time by smaller Portions, and needs no Explanation; but the Measure of a Year, not being so distinctly marked out by any obvious natural Limits, will require more to be said upon it.

From what has been said, then, it may be observed, that, from the Position of the Sun with Respect to the Earth, and Motions of one or other of them, the Almighty Creator has so disposed them, that we find two different Effects to arise from that Disposition; that is, * from one diurnal Revolution arises the Distinction of Day and Night; and from one annual Revolution arises the Distinction of the four Seasons of the Year: By the former, God determines Man to the agreeable Vicissitudes of Rest and Labour; by the latter, he instructs him how to measure Time by larger Portions, and to count, by Years, the Duration of Time past, or Time to come. For † “ Nothing
 “ can serve well for a convenient Measure of Time,
 “ but what divides the whole Length of its Dura-
 “ tion into apparently equal Portions, by constant-
 “ ly repeated Periods.” And it is as obvious, that,
 “ The diurnal and annual Revolutions of the Sun
 “ (as having been, from the Beginning of Nature,
 “ constant, regular, and universally observable by all
 “ Mankind, and supposed equal to one another)
 “ have been, with Reason, made Use of for the

* From the Motions of the Sun, as original Measures, are constituted, for our Use, two most signal, universal, natural, distinct, perceptible Measures of Time, which are as Standards for us Mortals to measure our Time by; and these are the Day and the Year. Dr. Holder on Time, p. 24.

† Locke, B. II. § 18, 19, 20.

“ Mea-

“ Measure of Duration ; and the Reason of it is,
 “ because there are certain Periods in its Motion,
 “ which serve as so many sensible Marks, very ob-
 “ vious to distinguish the Portions of Time.”

The most distinguished of these Marks are four ; two of them are the Times of equal Day and Night, on the opposite Seasons of Spring and Autumn, called the Equinoxes ; the third is the Winter Solstice, or the shortest Day of the whole Year ; the fourth is called the Summer Solstice, or the longest Day in that Season.

It is * impossible for any common Observer to find these out with any Degree of Exactness, for Reasons which I need not mention. The Learned do it not without some Difficulty : However, by frequent Observations, and preparatory Knowledge improved by Experience, it may be done. The Use to be made of them is this :

Astronomers observe the Instant, when the Sun departs from one of these Cardinal Points (called so by Way of Distinction) and count how much Time it takes up in making one entire Revolution, in its annual Course, before it returns to the same Point

* If you fix upright, upon an even and level Plane, a straight Wire, two or three Inches long, and draw a straight Line along the Shadow at Twelve o’Clock, and mark with a Needle the exact Length of the Shadow in that Line, as often as you can do it distinctly when the Sun shines, from one End of the Year to the other, you may find, pretty nearly, the Cardinal Points of the Seasons. For, when the Shadow is shortest in Summer, it is the Summer Solstice ; when longest in Winter, it is the Winter Solstice. When the Shadow, *shortening*, comes nearly to the middle Point between both, it is the vernal Equinox ; when the Shadow, *lengthening*, comes nearly to the same middle Point, it is the autumnal Equinox. As the Sun rises from its lowest Depression in Winter, to its highest Elevation in Summer, by very slow Degrees, it is not possible, by this Means, with Exactness, to find the Points ; but you may do it sufficiently to shew the Nature and Design of the Points, and Use of them in regulating the Calendar.

again.

again. This Space of Time is called a Solar Year. Its Length has been computed by different Astronomers, most of them differing some few Seconds one from the other : But, by later Improvements, and better Instruments, the Difference between them is very inconsiderable : It is so trifling that no Inconveniency can arise from it.

Such nice and elaborate Observations, and exact Calculations (for so, in Truth, they are) would be to little Purpose, if they served for nothing but Disputation or Amusement : So far from that, we find them of great Use for common Life, serving to adjust the Year, which is the ordinary Measure of Time, and which is of the utmost Importance to civil Life. Yet so great was the Difficulty of doing this with Exactness, that, until the * Days of *Julius Caesar* (at which Time the *Julian* Calendar, or Old Style was composed and brought into Use) the Methods of computing Time were very confused and perplexing, and † ill adapted to the Purposes they were designed for. The Calendar was framed then so as to answer pretty nearly to the ‡ precise Measure of one annual Revolution of the Sun, and has since been subject to fewer Errors.

The
 * Forty-four Years before Christ was born.

† The exact Length of Years, that several Nations counted by, are hard to be known, they differing very much from one another, and I think I may say, all of them from the precise Motion of the Sun. *Locke*, B. II. § 20.

‡ The Day is no aliquot Part of the Year, strictly speaking, neither to compound or divide the Year, so much as by Units : And, from these differing Properties of Day and Year, arise Difficulties in carrying on and reconciling the Supputations of Time, especially in long Measures : Although it must be confessed, that, for vulgar Use, where is no Need of, or Regard to, exact Calculation, we have no better Measure of a single Year, than the Day, and the artificial Solar Month, consisting of even Days ; because the Succession of Days is so visible, and so easily numbered, that by these we may keep as good an Account of the Year, as is needful for our common Occasions :

But,

The Difference between the Length of that Calendar, and the Length of a true Solar Year, or one entire Revolution of the Sun in its Orbit, from one Cardinal Point to the same again, was eleven Minutes and a few Seconds of Time. So small a Disproportion, in the Course of a Man's Life, makes but an inconsiderable Difference, in the Whole, from the true Measure of so many Years; but, when continually repeated for fifteen Hundred or two Thousand Years together, it amounts to a considerable Space of Time; first to Hours, then to Days and Weeks. This Error, often repeated, gave Occasion to the late Reformation of the Calendar, which is distinguished by the Name of the New Style.

That you may be sensible how this Difference arises, and what Effect it must have on Computation by Years, I will endeavour to illustrate it by an Example, comparing it with the Motion of a Clock, together with the Shadow on a Sun-Dial; which are the common Instruments of measuring Time, by lesser Portions, for the ordinary Convenience of Life. As it is the usual Method to correct the Variations of a Clock by comparing it with a Sun-Dial, so the only sure Means we have of adjusting the Measure of a Year is, by comparing and adjusting the Calendar by the annual Revolutions of the Sun.

To shew the Propriety of this Comparison, and fully explain my Meaning, let us suppose a Clock to be so adjusted in its Motions to the true Measure of Time, as described on the Sun-Dial by the

But, if we measure thus many Ages of Years by even Days, our Computation will be perplexed; for the Year (without Regard to Days) ends, and is terminated, with an odd Day, and odd Hours, and odd Minutes, and odd second Minutes, if we go no farther; so that it cannot be measured by any even Number of Days, or Hours, or Minutes. *Dr. Holder, p. 28.*

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Shadow, that it varies from it one Minute in the Space of twenty-four Hours, which is equal to one diurnal Revolution. This small Variation, uncorrected for sixty Days together, supposing it uniform, will cause the Clock to differ a whole Hour from the diurnal Revolutions of the Sun in that Space of Time. If it be still suffered to go on without Alteration, in the same Number of Days, it will lose another Hour; and, in six Times sixty Days, or about one Year, when the Shadow on the Sun-Dial points to the Hour of Twelve at Noon, the Index of the Clock will point at Six in the Morning.

Eleven Minutes and a few Seconds are, nearly, the hundred and thirtieth Part of one Day, as one Minute is the sixtieth Part of one Hour: The Measure of a Year, according to the Old Style, being about so many Minutes longer than a Solar Year measured by one Revolution of the Sun: For the same Reason that a Clock, which loses one Minute in a Day, will lose one whole Hour in sixty Days, and strike Eleven when it should strike Twelve, the Calendar that is too long by about eleven Minutes, will, in the Space of about one Hundred and thirty Years, lose one whole Day, or differ so much from the Course of the Sun: If suffered to go on, uncorrected, it will continue varying in the same Proportion, and after the same Manner that a Clock would do from the Dial.

To make my Meaning still more clearly understood, we may observe, that the Cardinal Points of the Solar Year were distinguished in the old Calendar, by four remarkable Holidays: The shortest Day, or Winter Solstice, by *Christmas*; the vernal Equinox, or Time of equal Day and Night in Spring, by *Lady-Day*, or *Annunciation*; the longest Day, or Summer Solstice, by *John the Baptist's*; and the autumnal Equinox, or Time of
equal

equal Day and Night in Autumn, by *St. Michael's* and *All Angels*. We may suppose they were so fixed to denote the true Cardinal Points of the Solar Year, as nearly as their Skill in Astronomy enabled them to do it at the Time of the Institution of these Holidays. These Days have been moving backward, together with the Calendar, at the Rate of about one whole Day in every Course of about one Hundred and thirty Years, from the true Cardinal Points, or Time of the Solar Year, whereon they were at first fixed, which amounted to about ten Days in thirteen Hundred Years; and, if the late Alteration had not been made, *Christmas-Day*, by the old Calendar, would, in Process of Time, have been kept at the Time of equal Day and Night in Spring, instead of the shortest Day of the Year; and, at last, on the longest Day in Summer.

This Variation of the Calendar from the Course of the Sun is so slow and gradual, that it must be imperceptible to a common Observer; but we must not conclude from thence, that it is not truly so: The Truth of it is not grounded on Conjecture, but on Fact and Observation.

That it may appear credible to the Unlearned, let us reflect on the gradual Change of the Seasons by Increase or Decrease of the Lengths of Days and Nights: The Alteration is not sensible to us before it is come to be considerable; or, to mention Instances still more within our Observation, if we watch the Motion of the Shadow on the Sun-Dial, or Growing of a Plant, with ever so much Attention, we cannot discern any Motion in one, or any Increase in the other: Yet, if we take a View of either after a considerable Interval of Time, and compare the different Situation of one, or the Bulk of the other, we shall find that the Shadow has been continually moving forward, though by slow Degrees; and that the Size of the Plant has been

increasing Day by Day, though imperceptibly to the Eye that watches it.

But, though this Error in the Calendar was imperceptible to every common Observer, it has been * long taken Notice of by the Learned in our own Nation, and a Reformation of it wished, and even solicited for, above four Hundred and fifty Years ago: It was complained of then as a Grievance, *intolerable to every wise Man, and hateful to every Astronomer*. It has been increasing ever since that Time, and every other Writer †, who has had Occasion to mention it, expresses his Dislike.

The ‡ Rule for finding *Easter*, in the old Calendar, was so false, in Consequence of this Error, and so contradictory to the primitive Rule, that some conscientious Ministers gave it as a Reason for refusing to subscribe to the Book of Common Prayer. Almost all the other Nations of *Europe* did alter it || above one Hundred and fifty Years since. In short, the Error was notorious, and called aloud for Reformation: But, as the Objections to it are made by the Unlearned, who are not acquainted with the Reason why it was wanted, or else by Persons, who, through a misguided Zeal, pay a superstitious Regard to Days, they deserve to be considered. I proceed therefore to answer such Objections as have been commonly made to the Alteration, particularly with Respect to the Festivals of the Church, consequent to the Change of the Calendar.

The Objection made to the late Alteration, grounded on the Novelty of it, because it differs a

* In the Year 1267, by *Roger Bacon*. See *Dr. Friend's Hist. of Phys.* Vol. II. p. 238, and Appendix.

† *Dr. Holder*, p. 68. As we are not now governed by the true Equinox in computing our moveable Feasts, it hath caused a great Irregularity in our Calendar, and wants to be reformed. See also *Wheatley* on the Rules.

‡ *Wheatley*, ib.

|| In the Year 1582.

little from that which was before in Use, is very trifling and insignificant, and may, with equal Force of Argument, be urged against all Improvements in Learning, and every Reformation of bad Laws, or of bad Habits and Customs. These do not so much as pretend to support their Objection with Reasons; therefore, ought rather to be compelled by Authority, than persuaded by Arguments, to comply with what is in itself right and useful.

The Authority, by which this Alteration was made, is the supreme Legislature of this Kingdom; the unanimous Concurrence of the Three States, from whom all new Laws must derive their Force and Obligation. We are bound to obey Laws made by them, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience Sake, as the Apostle tells us in a most plain and emphatical Manner: * *Let every Soul be subject to the higher Powers: For there is no Power but of God: The Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation.—Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath (to avoid the Punishment inflicted by Law) but also for Conscience Sake; God requiring from us an Obedience to all the legal Institutions of the Civil Magistrate. This is especially the Doctrine of the established Church, which it inculcates in its Offices, enforces in its Articles and Homilies, and recommends in all its Injunctions; without it all Government is precarious; the Establishment of Societies and Communities for the Improvement of Civil Life, and Preservation of Property, is impossible; and it ought, upon this Occasion, to be insisted on, in Support of a necessary and useful Law.*

* Rom. xiii.

The same Regulation was made (as I have observed already) in almost all the other Kingdoms of *Europe* about the Middle of Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, when the Reformation of Religion here was but just made, and scarce had acquired a firm Settlement. The Calendar was then known to be faulty, and to want some Regulation; but, from Reasons of Prudence and Policy, it was thought adviseable to defer it to a more convenient Time, and rather suffer the Evil of an incorrect Calendar, than run the Hazard of incurring a greater by introducing it then. The Errors of Popery were at that Time scarce abandoned; the Belief of the Pope's Infallibility was almost general, and was maintained with Resolution by many; so was also his Authority over Princes and their Subjects. If the Correction of the Calendar had been then introduced here, when we had but just shaken off his grievous Yoke, and when other Countries, owning the Jurisdiction of the Church of *Rome*, had received the same under the Direction and by Authority of the Pope, it might have given a Handle to inculcate the Doctrine of his Infallibility, since he could correct the Calendar, and made People less inclined to receive the Changes in Religion carried on in Opposition to his Authority and Influence: Not that there was any Force in the Argument, fairly considered, but because it might give Occasion to strengthen ill-grounded Prejudices. To have received it by foreign Authority would have been some Prejudice to the Reputation of our own Government; to have given Countenance to Errors, by receiving it at that Time, would have been blame-worthy: But now these Objections are entirely removed, and this has been thought, by the Wisdom of the Nation, a convenient Time to make the Alteration.

It has been conducted with all the Caution and Circumspection possible : Care has been taken that no Man should be injured in his Property by the Alteration : The Change is only in the Names of the Days ; all Contracts continuing fixed to the same natural Days ; all Obligations taking Effect at the same Distance of Time from their Commencement, that was intended and understood by the Parties at the Time of contracting.

If we consider the Subject Matter of this Law, the Nature of it, and the Authority on which it stood before, they will be found such as may be altered and regulated by the Legislature : It was not at first appointed by a divine Command but by human Authority, and contrived by the Art of Man ; therefore, not only may, but ought to be corrected, if faulty, by the same Art ; since Mankind are now greatly improved in all Sciences, but more especially in observing and calculating the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies.

The old Calendar was formed by the Skill of a heathen Philosopher, and established by the Authority of a *Roman* Emperor some Years before Christ was born ; and the Use of it admitted here by Custom rather than enjoined by any express Law : It is now corrected by the Skill of Christian Philosophers, and established by the supreme Authority of a Christian Government agreeably to the Constitution of the Kingdom ; which ought to be of some Weight with us as Christians, and Natives of this Island, to induce us to receive it the more readily.

Its having been received before in other Parts of *Europe*, and now almost in all, has been made an Objection to it, because some of those Nations acknowledge the Pope's Authority, and retain the Errors of the Church of *Rome*. We cannot be too

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zealous against the Errors of Popery, or too cautious of admitting any Alteration in our Laws by foreign Authority; but to refuse what is in itself right because others admit the same, or to reject what is legally commanded by our proper Governors because other Kingdoms still adhering to the Pope have established the same in theirs, is very unreasonable: We may, by the same Way of arguing, refuse to believe in Christ as Mediator because Papists believe the same; we may refuse to allow that Justice ought to be administered in our Courts of Judicature because other Nations require the same by their Laws.

In short, there is every Obligation to bind us to a ready Compliance with the Act for correcting the Calendar that any human Law or Institution can lay upon us.

The only plausible Pretence that can be made against our Compliance is the Change of the Days whereon the Feasts and Fasts of the Church were before observed: The Consequence of this Alteration has been, that some People observe the old *Christmas*, as it is most * absurdly called, while others, in Compliance with the Laws of their Country, observe that Festival as the Calendar now directs, and as it ought to be: By this Means two *Christmasses* are kept in one and the same Year.

In the primitive Times there was a Dispute about the Time of keeping *Easter*, some keeping it by one Rule, some by another: The Consequence

* It is to be wished, that in all future Almanacks no *old Christmas*, &c. should be inserted, but, eleven Days after the four Cardinal Points, the *old Quarter-day* should be put, and no more, unless they chuse, that (in an adjoining Column, as in some former Almanacks) the Days of Old Style should be set in their proper Order, without distinguishing any Days by the Names of the Saints, &c.

of which was, that sometimes * two *Easters* were kept in one and the same Year; some rejoicing in Remembrance of the Resurrection before others had finished their Course of Fasting and Humiliation in *Lent*, especially in Passion-week. This gave great Offence to all pious Christians, and was thought of such dangerous Consequence to Christianity, that it was the second Question, for its Importance, which the great Council of *Nice* was convened to debate and decide. † These Fathers expressed their Apprehensions of Danger to the Church from keeping two *Easters* in one Year. This Difference was then called, *A grievous Disorder, disturbing the Peace of the Church; destructive to the Solemnity of the Festival; creating Animosities between the Members of the Church*: And we may as well ap-

* *Socrates's Eccl. Hist. Book I. Chap. 8, 9. Bede, Book III. Chap. 25.*

† Because it was by the Authority of this Council that the Rule for finding the Time of *Easter* was established, and this Dispute decided, it will not be foreign to the Subject to observe, from *Eusebius*, who was Member of the Council, that above two Hundred and fifty Bishops met there from different Parts of the World; some of them eminent for Learning and Eloquence; some for Gravity and Holiness of Life; some for Constancy under Sufferings; some venerable for their Age as well as Piety; some had acquired great Honour, through Greatness of Parts, very early in Life. They had all been Witnesses of, and some of them suffered in, the *Dioclesian* Persecution, the cruellest that ever any People endured; it lasted ten Years together, and ceased not above twelve Years before they met at *Nice*. It was held in less than three Hundred Years from the Death of our Saviour. We can have no Doubt but they were sincere in their Professions of Christianity when they had persevered steadily in the Faith in the worst of Times; and lived so near the Days of the Apostles, that they had Opportunity to be well informed in the Doctrines and Precepts of their Religion. The Decrees of the Council are declared valid in this Kingdom, by Act of Parliament, 1 *Eliz. c. xxxvi. Euseb. Life of Const. B. III. Socr. B. I. c. 8. Sozom. B. I. c. 16. Theod. B. I. c. 10.*

prehend the same Consequences from keeping two *Christmasses*, if it continues. In Order, therefore, to put an End to so dangerous a Mistake, I will lay before you some Reasons why all should conform to the late Regulation in the Calendar, notwithstanding the Alteration of the Time in keeping it.

We may observe in general of all the Festivals of the Church, that none of them owe their Original to a divine Institution, or any Precept of Scripture. At the Time of the Reformation of Religion many Festivals, that had been before observed with great Strictness until that Time, were then abolished, and none retained but those that had their Rise in the earliest Ages of the Christian Church; but more especially such as had some Relation to our Blessed Saviour, or his Apostles.

The Season of *Christmas*, distinguished by so many concurrent Holidays, was intended to commemorate the Birth of Christ: It was, probably, appointed, as near as could be discovered at the Time of its Institution, according to the true Time on which it happened; though some * differ in their Opinion of this. That it was fixed on the very Day of his Birth is by no Means clear, nor is it possible from the Nature of Things to prove it was; since it must be between thirty and forty Years after it happened, before his own Apostles and Disciples looked on him as the Author of a new Religion; that is, not till after his Resurrection. There must be some Difficulty to fix on the very Day, even at that Distance: Nor is it probable that they were solicitous about the precise Day, since it would, no Doubt, fully answer the Design

* *Mann* in his Dissertation, from the Course of *Abia*, and Time of *John Baptist's* Birth, produces Arguments to prove that Christ was born in Spring.

of the Institution to keep it by a yearly Remembrance whether on the very Day or not. This may be said supposing it to be observed as soon as Christianity had, in a Manner, its Existence; whereas it may be doubted whether it was instituted so early or not.

Until the Time that the Church was established by the Civil Power under *Constantine* it was in a State of successive Persecutions: And it is not probable that they had set Days for observing * all their Festivals regularly till the Church enjoyed Peace, and had the Countenance of the Civil Magistrate, which did not happen till about three Hundred Years after Christ. If this was the Case the Difficulty of knowing whether it was fixed on the very Day is greatly increased; and, if we are not certain it was so before, there can be no Harm if we suppose it altered now.

Many † Conjectures have been made about the Reasons for placing the Days of *St. Stephen*, *St. John*, and *Innocents* immediately after the Feast of the Nativity; that is, why these rather than any others are commemorated at that Time: But, whatever might be the true Reason of the Choice, it was never suggested that the Days of their Birth, Martyrdom, or any other remarkable Incident of their Life or Death, concurred in Time with this. It was intended, by thus timing them, to add to the Solemnity of this high Festival; as the Days immediately following the Days of his Resurrection, and of the Descent of the Holy Ghost are distinguished by a peculiar Service, by Appointment of suitable

* There is a Direction when to observe *Christmas-Day*, *Epiphany*, *Lent*, and *Easter*, in *Apost. Const.* Book V. 12. *Zon. Edit.* of the Councils. But the Date of these Constitutions seems doubtful.

† *Wheatley* in loc.

Portions of Scripture to be read, and are marked in the Calendar as Holidays to raise our Veneration for the Blessings we commemorate on the foregoing Festivals.

I have observed already that the Cardinal Points of the four Seasons are marked in the Calendar by distinguished Holidays: This is done, probably, not with any View of pointing out to us the precise Time when that happened which we design to commemorate, but to preserve in us a constant Sense of Devotion and Gratitude at proper Intervals throughout the Year; to make these distinguished Days subservient to the more regular Administration of our Civil Concerns; and, by a continued annual Succession of the same Holidays, to habituate us to solemn Acts of Devotion through the whole Course of our Lives. Upon an Examination of the Calendar we can scarce help observing that to be the Design.

Even the Place and Year of the Martyrdom of some of the Saints are confessedly doubted of; and it is not credible that the very Day of any one of them could be so exactly kept in Remembrance as to admit no Doubt about it at the Time of their Institution.

With Respect to all the Festivals it concerns us to be more solicitous about the Manner of observing them than scrupulous to enquire whether they concur precisely in Time with the Fact we commemorate: The former is of great Importance to Religion, the latter favours more of Superstition than Devotion; the former tends to preserve in us a grateful Sense of the Blessing, or to raise in us Sentiments suitable to the Occasion; the latter serves rather to amuse an idle Curiosity, or gratify a weak Understanding.

But, supposing the Day of the Nativity to have been fixed at first on the very Day of our Saviour's Birth,

Birth, it is very obvious that this Day must have been greatly altered by the Error of eleven Minutes repeated Year by Year for so many Ages (as I have already explained it;) since the whole old Calendar was, as it were, removed *backwards* the Space of about eleven Days from the true and real Time of the Year as measured by the Sun: In Consequence of this the Day whereon this Festival was first appointed to be kept was, with Respect to the Calendar, moved *forward* the same Number of Days; that is, *Christmas-Day* being at first appointed to be kept nearly on the Winter Solstice, or shortest Day of the Year; the Day whereon it was kept by the Old Style was eleven Days later, that is, eleven Days after the Solstice; but by the New Style this Festival is brought back nearly to the same precise Day whereon it was first designed to be observed: If Conscience, then, is any Way concerned to keep the very Day it obliges us to follow the New Style not the Old, since, without Doubt, that is most conformable to the first Institution. The same is also true concerning all the Immoveable Festivals set down in the Calendar.

I come now to consider the Placing of the Moveable Feasts: The Timing of these depending on *Easter* it will be sufficient to speak of that alone; but, the Timing of this depending on the Time whereon the *Jewish* Passover was kept, that must be first explained.

In Order to do this with Clearness it is necessary to observe that, from the Beginning of the World to the Time of the *Israelites* Departure out of *Egypt*, that is, for the Space of above two Thousand five Hundred Years, it is generally agreed that the Beginning of the *Jewish* Year commenced in Autumn, at the equal Division of Day and Night.

At the Time, and upon Occasion of that great Event God himself, by *Moses*, fixed the Beginning of the *Jewish* Ecclesiastical Year to the Month *Abib*, which Month was determined or fixed by the full Moon that happened upon, or next after, the vernal Equinox, the Season directly opposite to that whereon the *Jewish* Year at first commenced. It was thus settled by this Precept, in the xiith of *Exodus*: *This Month shall be to you the Beginning of Months, it shall be the first Month of the Year to you.—Ye shall keep the Passover in the Month Abib (or Nisan;) for in the Month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.*

The *Jewish* Year did not consist of any certain Number of Days or Months, as the *Julian*, but sometimes of twelve, sometimes of thirteen Months, or Moons; for they counted their Months from new Moon to new Moon.

“ * Their Rule for adding a Month to the Year was this: Whenever, according to the Course of the common Year, the fifteenth Day of *Abib*, or *Nisan*, happened to fall before the Day of their vernal Equinox, then they added a Month, and the Paschal Solemnity was thereby carried on one Month farther into the Year, and all the other Festivals with it.” This was done by Authority of the High Priest.

It was, by divine Appointment, commanded that the Passover should begin on the fourteenth Day of their Month *Abib*, or *Nisan*; that is, the fourteenth Day was the Day of the Preparation whereon the Paschal Lamb was offered as a Type of the *Messiah*'s Death, about three o'Clock in the Afternoon. On the Evening of the same Day, at the Setting of the Sun, the *Feast of the Passover*, which was also called the *Feast of unleavened Bread*, be-

gan: This Feast lasted seven Days, * from the Evening of the fourteenth to the Evening of the twenty-first of the Moon.

The Festival of *Easter* was settled according to the *Feast*, and not the *Preparation of the Passover*; for, on the Day of the Preparation Christ was offered upon the Altar of the Cross. The Feast of the Passover lasting seven Days *Easter-Day* was appointed to be on the *Sunday* that happened within the seven Days of the *Feast of the Passover*, or *Feast of unleavened Bread*; that is, from the fifteenth to the one and twentieth Day of the Moon that was full upon, or next after the vernal Equinox, and never on the fourteenth.

Agreeably to this, the Rule for finding *Easter* is made in the new Tables and Calendar; for the vernal Equinox being found by Observation to be on the twenty-first of *March*, and the Calendar being so adjusted to the Course of the Sun that it will always, for the Future, be nearly the same, the Rule says, *That Easter-Day is always the first Sunday after the full Moon which happens upon, or next after, the twenty-first Day of March*. But, because the fourteenth Day or full Moon, on which the Paschal Lamb was offered and our Saviour crucified, may happen to be on *Sunday*, it is further added, *That, if the full Moon happens upon a Sunday, Easter-Day is the Sunday after*. It is the more necessary to observe this, because there was

* Offering the Paschal Lamb was the Preparation; the Feast was the Memorial of their Deliverance, which Feast lasted seven Days. Their Children were preserved by sprinkling the Blood of the Lamb on the Door-posts, and *Pharaoh's* destroyed in the Night whilst the *Israelites* were feasting; they departed on the next, *i. e.* the fifteenth. Accordingly, *Exod. xii. ver. 6*, the Appointment to kill; *ver. 8*, to feast on it at Night; *ver. 14, 17, 18, 19*, the Day of departing, whereof the Feast was the Memorial.

formerly

formerly a Dispute among Christians whether *Easter-Day* was ever to be observed on the fourteenth of the Moon. For though the Feast of the Passover began on the Evening of the fourteenth, yet it was judged to be too near a Conformity to the *Jews* to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ on that Day, though it happened on *Sunday*. This Rule, in the new Calendar, is agreeable to the * Determination of the Council of *Nice*, and to the general Practice of the Church of Christ, from the very Day of his Resurrection, as the Fathers of that Council and *Constantine* declare in their Epistles to the Churches, signifying to them the Decision of this Council.

† The

* The Decree of that Council concerning *Easter* is not preserved, but is referred to in subsequent Councils, and the Epistles already mentioned; by both it appears to have been, that all Churches should observe it on one and the same Day, not after the Manner of the *Jews*, but according to the general Practice of most Churches from the very Day of the Resurrection: The Historians name the particular Churches by whose Example all the rest were to be governed. Ep. as above, Can. Apost. VII. Council of *Antioch*, Can. 1. Apost. Const. Book V. 16. Council of *Carthage*, Can. 56, 79.

What was the primitive Practice before the Meeting of that Council may be learned from *Euf. B. VII. c. 32*; it was, that *Easter* should be kept on the first Month of the *Jewish* Year, as before explained. *Bede* gives a very full and clear State of the Question about *Easter*, as debated in *Britain* from the Year Six-hundred and three to its final Decision: It appears to have been, not whether *Easter-Day* should be kept on the fourteenth of the Month, whatever Day of the Week it should happen to be on, but on what *Sunday*; i. e. whether it should be kept on the fourteenth if it happened on a *Sunday*, or on the *Sunday* following. *Quem tamen (Diem Paschæ) et antea non semper in Luna quartadecima cum Judæis, ut quidam rebantur, sed in Die quidem Dominica, alia tamen quam decebat Hebdomada, celebrabant.*

It seems to me very probable that those Eastern Churches, which differed from the general Practice (referred to above) were not *Quartodecimans* in any other Sense of the Word than we find the ancient *Britons*, *Scots*, and *Irish* to have been;

since

† The Rule in the late Calendar is generally acknowledged to be erroneous, and therefore no Exception can be made why the primitive Rule should not be restored for finding *Easter* * by a more correct Equinox and Full of the Moon: But if this primitive Rule had been revived without reforming the Calendar, which was continually moving backward (as I have observed already,) the Consequence would have been that, in Process of Time, the two Festivals of *Christmas* and *Easter* would have been observed on one and the same Day.

It is further provided by the † late Regulation of the Calendar, that it shall be subject to no future Errors by Excess or Defect. It is contrived that the former Error should be remedied, without any sensible Alteration, by this easy Rule. Every hundredth Year, by the former Calendar consisting of Three-hundred sixty-six Days, commonly called Leap-Years; it is appointed by the new Style, that every hundredth Year for three Successions shall be common Years of Three-hundred sixty-five Days only; and every fourth Hundredth Year of Three-hundred sixty-six Days, or a Leap-Year; and so successively to all future Generations. This will prevent the former Error, and keep the

since they defend their Custom by the Example and Tradition of the Eastern Churches, and of St. *John*. This Tradition had its Rise with the first Planting of Christianity amongst them, which was before the Council of *Nice*.

† The Council of *Nice* made no Tables for finding of *Easter*; but Notice of the Time was sent early to other Churches by the Bishop of *Alexandria*, Astronomy being then better understood in *Egypt* than elsewhere. At last, *Theophilus* Bishop of *Alexandria* made a Table of One-hundred Years for *Theodosius*; then his Successor *Cyril* made one of Ninety-five Years; this *Diomysus Exiguus* continued down below the Year Seven-hundred. See *Bede*. See also Dr. *Holder*, Pag. 92.

* *Euf. B. VII. C. 32.*

† See the Act.

Calendar,

Calendar, as near as may be, to the Course of the Sun; and the Festivals to their proper Seasons and appointed Days, agreeably to their first Institution.

The Tables for finding the true full Moons by the Golden Numbers, or Cycle of nineteen Years, (* which were made by a false Calculation in the old Calendar, and which was one Cause of the Errors of the late Rule for finding of *Easter*) are also rectified in the new Calendar, and all future Errors prevented, not only for the present, but to all future Generations, by the general Tables, as far as it can be; these Tables directing us to find the true Paschal full Moon as accurately as its Courses will admit of without immediate Observations at, or near the Times that they happen upon.

* The several Cycles explained by *Prid.* 229—237, were intended that, after the Expiration of such Cycles, the same new Moons, the same full Moons, and the same Dominical Letters, and the same Times of *Easter*, would all come over again in the same Order of Time, as in the former Cycle, and so on in all following Cycles for ever. And accordingly they would have done so, had the same new Moons and full Moons come over again at the same Point of Time in every Cycle of the Moon with the same Exactness, as every Dominical Letter did again in every Cycle of the Sun. But the nineteen Lunar Years, and seven intercalated Lunar Months, of which this Cycle consisted, falling short of nineteen *Julian* Years by one Hour, twenty-seven Minutes, and forty Seconds, hence it hath followed, that in every one of the Years of these Nineteen-years-cycles the new Moons and full Moons have happened just so much sooner each Month, than in the same Years of the Cycle immediately preceding. And hereby it hath come to pass, that after the Elapsing of so many Rounds of that Cycle, as have revolved from the Time of the *Nicene* Council to the present Year 1716, the new Moons and full Moons in the Heavens, have anticipated the new Moons and full Moons in the Calendar of our Common-Prayer Book (or Old Style) four Days and ten Hours and a Half, because the new Moons and full Moons are there stated not according to the present Times, but according to the Times of that Council. *Prid.* Page. 236, Vol. II.

Now

Now having gone through the more perplexed and intricate Part of this Discourse, which the Nature of the Subject must unavoidably make so to Persons not skilled in Astronomy ; give me Leave to lead you through a more pleasing Scene, and suggest to you such Thoughts and Reflections, as a wise and good Man would make on reviewing the whole.

In reflecting on the present Subject, we must turn our Thoughts from Earth to Heaven, where the Eye ranges unconfined, and the most simple Observer must see with Admiration the Greatness and Glory of his Maker. *The Heavens*, even to him, must *declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shew his Handy-work*. But to the Philosopher the Scene is greatly enlarged ; the Immensity of those Bodies ; the Wisdom and Contrivance of their Dispositions ; the Regularity of their Motions ; their wonderful Continuance for many successive Ages in the same State ; their taking the same regular Paths, measuring immense Spaces with the most punctual Exactness, answering thereby the Designs of Providence, and contributing to the common Good and Beauty of the Universe, but especially serving the Use, and employing the Thoughts of Man : These cannot but convince him that God, who made them, is a Being of infinite Power, of infinite Wisdom, of infinite Goodness.

On the other Hand, if we reflect on the Faculties and Improvements of the human Mind, which is able to measure Bodies placed at so immense a Distance ; to trace their Motions through all these intricate Paths ; and to calculate with surprising Exactness, in what Time they perform their destined Courses ; to apply this Knowledge to the Use of Civil Life, in measuring Years, and computing the
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Succession of Time to the longest Duration past or to come ; it must afford us a fresh Object of Admiration and Praise. It will force us to infer, that if we have great Reason to acknowledge unfathomable Wisdom and Power, discoverable in one Plant, how much more in one Animal, in all of them, but especially in Man ? He appears designed to Functions far more various, and more noble ; to contemplate the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies. To despise the Improvements made by their Labour is to reject Copies taken from the Works of God by rejecting a Calendar formed on the Plan discovered to us in the Motions of so stupendous a Fabric.

When we see *the Vallies stand so thick with Corn, that they laugh and sing*, as the Royal Psalmist expresses himself, we admire the Skill of the Husbandman, and are thankful to him for his Industry, being sensible the Earth will not yield its Increase without Culture and Improvement. We are often Witnesses of the Labour he undergoes, the Watchfulness of his Attendance, and the continued Succession of his Toils. But the Philosopher acting in a more retired Scene, his Mind rather than his Body being employed in the Researches he is obliged to make, we are less sensible of his Pains ; we are unthankful for his Improvements ; we refuse the Benefits he would confer upon us, not knowing how many sleepless Nights he passes in watching the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies ; the deep Attention he must give to make the most exact and difficult Calculations. A tolerable Proficiency in Arithmetic, a moderate Skill in Geometry and Algebra, are esteemed laudable Improvements and useful Accomplishments in other Men ; but the highest Advancement in
these.

these is no more than a Preparation to excel in the Science of Astronomy, by Skill in which the Faults in the Calendar have been found out and corrected.

Reflecting on these Things all Ranks and Degrees of Men should be excited humbly to acknowledge the Goodness of God, in making so plentiful a Provision for the useful Accommodations and Ornaments as well as Necessaries of human Life, by the various Progress he has taught us to make in the several Professions, each in its proper Sphere contributing to the common Good. Let us thankfully receive their Improvements in their proper Calling, their Labours for the Good of Society. Of the Body Politic, as well as of the Natural, it may be said, *The Whole is not one Member, but many. The Eye cannot say unto the Hand, I have no Need of thee; nor again the Head to the Feet, I have no Need of you. Nay, much more, those Members of the Body which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. God hath set the Members, every one of them, in the Body as it hath pleased him; having given more Honour to that Part that lacked.* He disposes the several Members of Civil Society for various Functions and Employments, by the various Endowments and peculiar Turn of their Genius and Dispositions. The Men of Learning he hath appointed to make Improvements in the liberal Arts; the Unlearned to enjoy the Benefit of their Improvements with Thankfulness: The Legislature he hath appointed to frame useful Laws for the Good of Society; Subjects he hath enjoined to yield Obedience to these Laws; these mutually contribute to the common Benefit, nor can any one of them suspend or remit their peculiar Duties and Employments without bringing the Whole into Disorder, and affecting every Member in particular.

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The Object of the Law now under Consideration is the Regulation of the Calendar for the Convenience of Civil Life ; it has been shewn to be both useful and necessary ; it is hurtful to no one Member of the Society ; our Liberty is no Way affected by it ; particular Care has been taken that no Man's Property should be hurt by the Alteration of the Change in the Time of observing the Feasts and Fasts, in Consequence of the Reformation in the Calendar, has been shewn not only consistent with the primitive Design of their Institution, but, in some Instances, and those the most material, more conformable to the Decrees of a general Council, and the Practice of the Church in the primitive Times ; the Authority by which it is enacted, is the Legislature of this Kingdom, which we are bound to obey, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience Sake ; and he that resists this Power, by refusing to submit to its Laws and Injunctions, in so reasonable an Instance, resisteth the Ordinance of God.

F I N I S.